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A-TAE
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A T A E

By EDWARD GREY



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A - T A E

A CHINESE LOVE STORY.

After going a short distance, he (Jerry Thompson) fell in with a party of tea-gatherers, who invited him to join them. As he had no definite plan for the future, he accepted their offer, and, receiving a basket, was soon toiling up the hillside. The business was one which required the labourers to be at work by sun-rise, as the kind of tea they were gathering is not picked when the sun gets too far up. A light fog hung about the hills, and the faces of most of the women were enveloped in wrappers, but as the day broke they took off these cloths, and revealed some very pretty countenances.

Upon their arrival at the plantation to which the party were bound, the leader appointed the pickers and carriers: the former were expert young girls who had been trained to the business from childhood, while the latter consisted of the "dull-heads," or men; and as the sailor was supposed to be a poor Cantonese, and as such could know nothing about picking tea, he was directed to hold the basket for a sprightly girl named A-tae.

Now, it is usual for the girl who picks the finer kinds of tea to be dressed in much better clothes than her basket-holder, and as A-tae was a beauty and tolerably well-off, she was smartly attired; true, her garments were not very costly, but they were new and jauntily worn. Her dress consisted of two pieces, the usual loose blue trousers and wide-sleeved jacket, her hair being braided in queues which descended to her waist, while her head was protected from the sun by an immensely wide bamboo-hat.

When the overseer directed the sailor to bear her basket she had not cast eyes upon the latter, having been listening to the silly story of a companion, so, thinking it was the usual "dull-head," she waved him to follow her, and turned into one of the rows; then, dexterously grasping a handful of leaves, she cried, "Come here!" and upon his placing the sieve-like basket under her hands, showered the leaves into it with marvellous rapidity. Having exhausted one bush, she was moving towards another, when, catching sight of her attendant, she uttered a little scream, and coquettishly turned away her head. Seeing her agitation, the enamoured basket-holder inquired if she were unwell.

"No! I'm— Come here, you fright!"

The girl worked like lightning, ordering her holder about in a most imperious manner. At last curiosity overcame her, and she demanded the name of her slave.

"I have no name."

"No! How shall I call you then?"

"Call me Sa" (ugly of the sort).

"Oh no! oh no! that would be cruel."

"Call me Cha-täc" (a mean fellow).

"No, no, for you are not mean."

"What will you name me, then?" said Jerry, looking as though he could devour her. "What you call me shall be my name."

A-tae trembled as she cast a timorous glance towards her basket-bearer, and replied, "I call you Sho" (beautiful eyes), saying which she laughed, and added, "but surely you will not take that name?"

"I'll call myself anything you choose to name me."

"Then I give you this,—Yung-Yung" (good-humoured face).

"And what may I call you?"

"Me! Dont you know?" said the pretty girl, looking at Yung-Yung in a manner which made his heart bump again. "What! not know my name?"

"I do not. I am a wanderer and a stranger here."

"Poor fellow. Have you no friends?"

"None here. Will you be my friend?"

"You dont know my name, yet ask me to be your friend. Speak lower, and look down while you talk, or the overseer will send some one else with me to-morrow."

"What is your name?"

"A-tae."

After casting his eyes about in order to ascertain if any of the pickers were watching, he bent over the girl, who was very deeply engaged in removing some fine shoots from the lower part of a plant, and when she arose, as her cheek came quite close to his, he kissed it gently, and said,

"A-tae, I love you."

The girl gave a nervous little laugh, then asked him what he meant.

"I want to marry you."

"Where do you come from, Yung-Yung-Sho, that you speak thus? Would I could be given to one like you; But I shall be, like other girls, sent off to slave for some man of my own class, or sold to a mandarin." (It will be perceived that A-tae was, although a Chinese, an advocate for woman's rights.) "Oh Yung-Yung-Sho, do you think Buddha knows how badly they treat us poor girls?"

"Can't you run away with me?" observed the sailor; "slip off in the night, and go away to a country where the women are thought as much of as the men."

"That's where Buddha is, Yung-Yung-Sho. *There* we shall be men. I know all about that, and have my Tieh papers at home. I'm not as stupid as most girls. You are a benevolent man thus to listen to the nonsense of little me. But why do those Yuen-chae (police-runners) point this way? Are you wanted? If so, flee. That way, that way; up among the rocks, and hide in the caves."

Jerry had little time to say farewell, as he noticed the two soldiers (Corporal Pang and Yung), accompanied by police-runners, making towards him; so, after bestowing a fervent kiss upon the lips of the astonished A-tae, he sprang over the tea-plants, and sped away like the wind. The poor girl sank upon the ground, cried, and wrung her hands like one demented. Her companions gathered round, and finding she was in trouble, prevailed upon her to go home. Meanwhile the soldiers and their party chased the agile sailor, running until they got out of breath; and when they last spied him he was darting into a wood, which was set apart for the use of Buddhist priests, and where they felt sure of bagging him during the course of the day.

A-tae walked home like one in a dream, and was questioned by her mother, who anxiously inquired if she had "seen a spirit" she looked so scared and pale. She had seen one, the recollection of whom would never again be absent from her mind. She was in love, had been spoken to by a being, one of the opposite sex, who neither commanded nor treated her like an inferior animal. Was it not a dream? Was he not one of those genii who assuming the appearance of gods, use their fatal beauty to destroy all whom they fell in with? What could he be?

Poor little girl! She was sorely tried; so taking a few sticks of incense, she burned them before the picture of the Kitchen god, in order if possible to get *him* on her side. But she didn't tell her mother about Yung-Yung-Sho.

Towards the evening she became very ill; and by night her anxious parents sent for a doctor, who, after writing a prescription, submitted it to them.

"How much will it cost?" demanded the father.

"Two hundred cash," gravely replied the man of physic.

"Can't you do it a little cheaper? we are poor people."

"I dont think I can. Let me see. I can leave out the dried rat's tails—they are costly—and the alligators' blood may be omitted. Well, say one hundred cash."

The mother was a clever woman, and didn't believe in the doctor's nostrums, so she demanded how much the gentleman wanted for the prescription.

"Fifty cash."

"Pay him and let him go, my lord," she observed to her husband, who thereupon handed over the cash, and the doctor departed. When he was out of sight the old woman nodded shrewdly towards her husband, as much as to infer, "trust me for being smart," then having prostrated herself before the picture of the Kitchen god, gravely burned the prescription, and pouring some warm tea upon the ashes, carried the drink to her daughter, and compelled her to swallow it, saying soothingly, "you'll be all right tomorrow."

"Oh, my heart, my heart," moaned the poor little girl.

“Oh, it is not your heart, A-tae, it’s your brain that has become oiled by the sun. You’ll be all right now, as it will congeal again;” and having delivered herself to this very Chinese opinion, the old lady withdrew, leaving the poor child to combat a disease as old as the hills, and for which there has never been but one cure since the world began. Nothing but the possession of the loved one will satisfy the poor souls, who, like A-tae, suffer from this awful affliction. No doctor can cure them,—possibly the priest may,—but not the man of medicine.

When the girl’s mother saw her husband the latter did not ask how fared his darling A-tae. She was but a girl, and her death would not cause him to shed a tear, but the mother made up her mind to one thing, as she informed her help. “If that girl gets a little better, I’ll take her to Nan-woo,” a very sanctified Buddhist bonze, who lived in a hole in a rock situated in the Buddhist grove, distant about eight li from her house. But A-tae became worse, so they bled her. This took away what little strength she had left, and the gossips said she would soon salute heaven. Upon the afternoon of the fifth day some of the women round her bed were speaking about the hunt after the stranger who had been working with A-tae upon the day she was taken sick, and after observing that “he must have bewitched the child,” they mentioned something which had a wonderful effect upon the girl, and which caused her to rally from that moment.

* * * * *

Jerry, having distanced his pursuers, determined to search for the caves of which A-tae had spoken.

It was a smart chase, as the runners knew every inch of the ground; and after having sighted him several times, but to lose him again the next moment, one of them saw him disappear up a sort of ravine, from which they were certain he could not escape.

"It is the retreat of Nan-woo, a very holy bonze, and he is as safe in that hole as a rat is in a bottle," observed one of the police.

"He is a wizard, and will fly out if all other means fail him. Oh, I know we shan't catch him," grumbled Yung.

"How can we fail, your excellency?" replied one of the attendants. "That path leads to a high rock, in which is a small hole, where Nan-woo entered fifty years ago. On each side of the path is a precipitous rock, which no man can climb; therefore your foreign devil, upon finding the path leads to *nowhere*, will retrace his steps. Let us, therefore, crouch down upon either side of the rocks at the entrance, place a cord across the pathway, await his return, and when he arrives we will lift the line, and trip him up."

"Capital, capital!" cried the soldiers. Thereupon the party divided, and crouching down behind the gigantic boulders which lay beside the entrance to the gulch, string in hand, awaited the return of the sailor. They calculated he would

possibly have a little chat with the bonze, then, finding there was no other outlet, would fall into their hands, and be captured without difficulty. Every now and then some noise, probably caused by rabbits, would make them start and clutch their line, but after waiting a considerable time, hunger reminded them that they had started upon the expedition without taking breakfast, and they determined to proceed up the ravine, and boldly bring the "eccentric one to bay."

Having explored nearly the entire length of the place, they turned a bend in the pathway, and found themselves before the retreat of Nan-woo; but where was the sailor?

"I expect he is in there along with the bonze," whispered Yung.

"Bosh! How could he get in there? Why, it is five feet from the ground, and the hole is too small."

"Ask the hermit if he has seen a man?" put in one of the runners.

Upon this Pang, who did not believe in Buddhism, and consequently had little respect for its bonzes, advanced to the opening, and rapping his sword-handle against the screen, demanded if the old gentleman inside had seen a fellow trying to climb up the rocks which surrounded his cell.

Fumbling at the slab of limestone which formed the screen before the entrance or pigeon-hole of his cell, repeating as he did so the words "o-mi-tu-fuh, o-mi-tu-fuh," the old bonze at last

succeeded in pushing the panel into a hole cut out for its reception in the side of the rock, and then asked the soldier what he wanted, upon which the latter repeated his question.

The old bonze looked at his interrogator for some moments; at length appearing to understand him, replied, "My son, since first I entered this abode, these eyes have never beheld a man attempt to scale those rocks—o-mi-tu-fuh, o-mi-tu-fuh."

"Come along, Pang; he's cracked. Let us seek the fellow in some other place; or, better still, we will return, or join the first party of rebels we come across, as it will never do for us to go back to our native town and say we have lost him."

After a strict search they gave the matter up, and dismissing the police runners, proceeded to the nearest rebel town, where they were received with open arms by Ma-chow-wang, who commanded the insurgents in that district.

"When the sailor entered the ravine he imagined it had another outlet, but upon discovering the small oven-like opening in the rock at the end (the same being open at the time), he, taking it for the entrance to a burial-vault, after running to give himself impetus, sprang up, clutched the ledge with his hands, then forcing in his head and shoulders, wriggled through, and dropped upon the floor.

Nan-woo was slumbering, but in his sleep repeating the words "o-mi-tu-fuh;" upon which

Jerry shook him, then prostrated himself, and, to the best of his ability, repeated the same words to the astonished bonze, who looked at him with horror, and quaveringly demanded who he was.

"Oh, my tooth full! oh, my tooth full!" ejaculated the prostrate sailor. However, at length he got up, and, in his best Chinese, prayed the bonze would save his life, and hide him from his enemies.

Nan-woo was a merciful man, and as he had long desired an assistant, or disciple, agreed to shelter the fugitive. Having instructed him to hold his tongue, the old bonze took his position behind the screen, and awaited the arrival of the soldiers; how he got rid of them has been described.

When night came the bonze lit a lamp, and Thompson had an opportunity of seeing what his quarters were like. The cell was an irregular apartment, cut out of the solid limestone rock. There was no furniture, but an old mat, while a water-jar, and an earthen chatty, containing a few handful of dry rice, were the only kitchen articles the bonze possessed.

Jerry surveyed the latter for a few moments, then asked if that was what he lived on? upon which the old man nodded, and taking a handful of rice, threw a few grains into his mouth, then drank a sup of water.

"Well," exclaimed the sailor in his native language, "here's a go. I've been and signed ar-

ticles to a toad in a hole, and got to live in a box office, on dry rice and water."

Their frugal meal having been partaken of, the bonze chin-chinned his disciple, and with the assurance that no man would dare come up the gulley at night (as he had declared it was haunted), the old gentleman dropped down upon his knees, and o-mi-tu-fuh'd at such a rate that Jerry set it to music, and joined in a sort of chorus.

"I wonder what the deuce it means? I used to hear poor Jow a-saying of it. Oh my tooth full (stretching himself, and yawning); don't I wish I had a toothful of grog."

When the sailor awoke the next morning he found the old bonze still at it,—“o-mi-tu-fuh, o-mi-tu-fuh!” and he kept it up all day, repeating the words in a mechanical sort of manner, which at times greatly irritated his companion.

About ten o'clock a woman came, and asked what she should do to obtain luck.

“Bring a dish of boiled rice and some tea, and place them in the road before my cell, as an offering to the evil spirits. Do this daily for a week.”

When she had departed another arrived, and the sailor amused himself, and improved his knowledge of the language, by listening to their wants. At last one came whose story caused the man to be all ears. It was A-tae's mother, who thus detailed her daughter's symptoms.

“She has devils in her brain, who speak for her, and I fear she will die.”

Nan-woo, who had great faith in a youthful constitution, gave the afflicted mother two slips of bamboo, upon one of which was written, "Decline present benefit, and receive greater reward in future;" while the other ran as follows: "Ten thousand devils are not as tormenting as a bad heart."

A-tae's mamma read these, and accepted them as the words of an oracle, of course torturing their meaning to suit her daughter's case.

"When A-tae gets well, what shall she do?"

"Bring me every morning, for one month, a basket of fruit and some young tea, then I will assure her perfect health."

Jerry gave a sigh of relief. "I'll see her again somehow," he thought.

It was a few days after this that the gossips were chatting around A-tae's mat, and what they said was this: "Oh, Mrs. So-and-so, have you heard the news? You remember how two soldiers hunted the man who frightened this poor child so? Well, they chased him to Nan-woo's hermitage, and the bonze told them that as soon as the thing saw him, it burst into a flame and vanished."

"Did you ever?" cried one gossip.

"Bless us!" said another.

And little A-tae winked behind their backs.

"Oh, splendid Yung-Yung-Sho, I shall see you again, my lord, my emperor, my deity. I shall live if I can only look upon you now and then.

We will be like the Neih, who enjoy sublime love by merely glancing at each other O dazzling Sho! You shall be my god, and I will burn incense to you day and night. My whole frame thrills with exquisite delight when I hear your voice. My eyes light up like lamps at night when I view you, Sho. Oh, my absorbing god, never look coldly upon A-tae. You will always speak gently to me, will you not? Always be so kind and tender to your little A-tae, who loves you from your queue to your shoes." Thus apostrophized the happy girl, and it was no wonder old Nan-woo's charms worked, for Cupid was directing them; and as musk overpowers every other odour so, beside love, all pleasures in this life are utterly dwarfed and lost. 'Twas love nearly caused the death of A-tae, and the same potent spell restored her to life and hope.

"Now, whether you like it or not, you shall visit Nan-woo next week," observed the girl's mother.

"I'll try," dutifully replied A-tae. "I'll go, mother, even if it kills me. I'd rather die than displease my parents." Cunning little A-tae!

Little A-tae improved wonderfully in health, and within five days after her mother's visit to Nan-woo announced that she was ready to set out for the sacred grove. Her parent did not content herself with sending only some fruit and tea, but added sweetmeats and sundry delicacies, including a little rock-salt, which she packed in a

neat bamboo basket, and gave her daughter, with many minute instructions as to her deportment.

It was a lovely autumnal day; as the girl bent her steps towards the hill she mechanically sang a very old Chinese ditty called "The life of a leaf," while her thoughts, wandering more fleetly on, were already with her beloved Yung-Yung-Sho. Strange to say, after the first few stanzas she altered the words in a manner which would have puzzled any Celestial who overheard her. The original song ran as follows:—

"Of the young bud, covered with down,
Soft as the breath of a zephyr,
Unfolding to the sun, a leaf appears,
Tender as the cheek of an infant.
At first thin, delicate, transparent,
Developing quickly, veined like the hand of a maiden,
From first to last always beautiful.
After reclining in the light of the golden sun,
And coquetting with the silver moon
For many days,
The early (eager, forward) frost kisses it gently.
Gemming it with beauty.
It blushes at the embrace;
Emboldened, the touch is repeated,
When lo, the ruddy colour flies, and
The leaf, pale and trembling,
Drops upon the bosom of the earth."

That was what she should have sung, but she altered it in this manner, for after uttering the words,

"From first to last always beautiful,"

pouring her heart out in melody, she sang,

"Oh! charming Yung-Yung-Sho,
By day my sun, by night my moon.
Always thus to remain.
I cannot forget the gentle embrace
You gave me in the tea-field,

My face burns with happiness.
But you will never repeat it?
Oh! will you?
Soon again I shall behold the bright light of your eyes!
Ah me! then pale and trembling
Shall I sink upon the earth,
And die of very happiness."

As she sang this her eyes sparkled, and a smile illuminated her face. Was she not going to meet her true love, her own Yung-Yung-Sho? Under those circumstances even a plain girl would have looked charming, and little A-tae appeared happy as a bird and bright as a diamond.

The girl proceeded at a brisk rate until she came to the entrance of the ravine, upon which she stopped and tormented herself with surmises. "He has fled. He *was* killed, for my mother did not mention him. I am devoured with affliction; I must go back," she thought, but after a while summoned courage, and walking up the pathway, found herself before the hole in the wall.

"Ahem!" said a voice, which she knew did not belong to Nan-woo.

A-tae blushed, cast down her eyes, and lifting the tribute basket placed it gently upon the ledge, but was too much agitated to speak.

"Ahem!" repeated the person inside.

"Sho," timidly whispered the girl, still looking at the ground; and ere she could raise her eyes the stone screen was pushed back, and Jerry thrusting forth his arms, seized her, and lifting her up, imprinted a burning kiss upon her lips.

"O Sho, don't."

“You beauty, how I have longed to see you!” whispered the happy fellow. Of course his Chinese was not perfect by a long way, but he managed to make her understand, and what he could not utter with his tongue he expressed with his eyes, his only drawback being his inability to kiss her often, as the operation was not only awkward but absolutely dangerous. After a delicious half-hour, during which he told her that she was the most beautiful woman in the world at least twenty times, she asked for Nan-woo.

“Oh, he’s asleep.”

“Wake him. Good-bye. I’ll come again, tomorrow, my lord,” said she, kissing her hand in imitation of her lover; then, assuming a demure expression of countenance, awaited the awakening of the bonze.

After shaking the old gentleman until he began to fear he would dislocate his neck, the sailor succeeded in getting Nan-woo to open one eye, and to slowly utter “o-mi-tu-fuh,” upon which the deputy bonze repeated the irritation until he got through a good many “o-mi-tu-fuh’s;” then he informed him that a *person* wanted him, and added in English, “If I ketch you a winkin’ at her I’ll stop your rice, so mind.” Not that the bonze was likely to be guilty of such a breach of discipline, but the sailor was so love-stricken, that he would have quarrelled with A-tae’s shadow from very jealousy.

After receiving the offering, Nan-woo glanced at the girl, and observed, “Bring another to-

morrow ; go, you are better ; then squatting upon his mat recommenced his "o-mi—" refrain, assisted in the performance by his deputy, who growled out a deep bass, whistled, or sang a falsetto accompaniment as the whim took him. Not that it mattered to the bonze what he did, provided he kept within the cell, as after Jerry had been with him a week, except when spoken to, he took no more notice of his disciple than he would of a tame kitten.

One of the police-runners was related to A-tae's family ; and being a cool, calculating scamp, who did not believe in the supernatural, could not make out how it was that Jerry had left the ravine. Knowing he would receive a large reward if he captured him, he communicated his suspicions to A-tae's brother, a rowdy named Hew-chaou, upon which they determined to keep an eye upon the Buddhist grove, particularly about the ravine ; and as winter had set in, they searched diligently for foot-prints in the snow.

The girl returned every day, and upon some occasions had the inexpressible happiness of speaking to her lover, when one morning, to her astonishment, she found Jerry out of the cell, and waiting for her at the entrance to the ravine.

"Oh, my lord ! O Sho ! Hie thee back. If they see you we are lost."

"Nonsense. I've been cooped up long enough, and mean to have a cruise. I can't stand it any longer ; besides, Nan-woo's asleep—he spends

half his time so now ; I think he won't live long. But what makes you look so pale ? ”

“ My lord Sho, for ten days, in fact, since the snow first fell, I have been watched by two men, —one is my brother Hew-chaou, and the other the police-runner who hunted you. Oh, do not expose yourself to these wolves. My brother is a bad man and would sell your head for a sapeck, and the runner is a tiger.”

“ I don't fear them, A-tae, but I'm getting lonely and am half-starved. Will you leave this place and go with me ? ”

“ I can't,” she sobbed.

“ Why not ? ”

“ We should not get ten li before they would track us. Then what would become of you, my lord Sho ? ”

They had walked up the ravine, and were now just outside the cell, when suddenly the head of the old bonze protruded from the hole, his eyes wide open with astonishment and terror.

“ O-mi— come in, you fool ! o-mi-tu-fuh, you blind idiot, come in ! ” saying which he threw his arms about, and behaved in such a ridiculously frantic manner, that out of compassion Jerry kissed A-tae, and wriggled through the hole into the cell.

Nan-woo was a very proper old man, and the sailor's proceedings quite scandalized him, but after a few hours he relapsed into his vegetable state, and things went on as before. One night in the

depth of winter the deputy was awakened by the moans of the old fellow, and hastened to his assistance, but after having made him some tea, he retired again to his mat, imagining the malady allayed by the warm drink. However, when day broke he found his senior would soon repeat his last "o-mi," as he was going fast. Thinking the case required religious consolation, he did his best under the circumstances, and as, with all his faults, Thompson was not without some sort of religion, he managed to remember a prayer or two, which he repeated to the dying bonze, winding up by way of a hymn with

"How doth the little busy bee,"¹

repeated slowly. Nan-woo looked at him with a stony expression of countenance, and about eleven A. M., after a faint struggle, with a half-uttered "o-mi-t—" upon his lips, the old bonze breathed his last, "saluting heaven" from the arms of his sorrowing companion.

"Here's a fix. On a lee shore, skipper gone, and nothing but breakers all round. Well, poor old bluffer, you saved my life and put up with me, and now you're gone, I'll bury you decently;" saying which he pushed the body through the hole, and having taken it out of the ravine succeeded in burying it in a snowdrift, where the mortal remains were found in the spring, and interred by a brother bonze.

¹ Very inappropriate at the death-bed of a Buddhist bonze.

After the death of Nan-woo the sailor set to work and pulled down the rocks which had been piled up in front of the cell fifty years before, when the old bonze entered it, the occupation tending to keep his blood in circulation, and preventing him from thinking of his loneliness. He knew none of the old women who frequented the place in fine weather would be likely to visit him then, and it was not until his companion had been dead a week that A-tae again made her appearance. Before the snowy weather set in the girl had managed to bring him several articles of warm clothing, and a number of bundles of rice-straw, which he formed into a bed, so his situation was not quite so forlorn as might have been imagined, his great trouble being a fear of starvation; but when A-tae came pattering up the path he gave a cheer, and rushing out caught her in his embrace.

"Please, Sho!—my lord—don't!"

"I'm so glad to see you; you can't tell how lonely I have been. The old man is dead, and but for you, I would have left and risked capture."

"Hist! Did you hear a noise?"

"Nonsense! It is your imagination."

"I fear my brother has followed me. He is very suspicious, and wanted my mother to prevent my coming, but I said I must, or I should never have any luck. Hist!—I hear it again; 'tis some one moving. Let us hide."

"Who would hurt you?"

"My brother would kill me if he found me with you. I know his passionate nature."

"Stay here until night falls, and then we will dress in the old bonze's clothes, and leave the place. In his winter hoods no one will be able to know who we are, and once at Hang-Chow, there are a thousand chances to reach the sea, where I can ship in a junk, and take you as my wife."

After much persuasion the girl agreed to remain with him, observing that death would be preferable to such misery as they had endured for the last few days.

The words had hardly passed her lips before her brother suddenly sprung from behind a rock, and, drawing a short sword, plunged it into her body.

With the cry like that of a wounded tiger, the sailor jumped at Hew-chaou, and seizing the sword, delivered cut after cut until the rowdy was covered with wounds. After a desperate struggle, during which both fought like demons, the Chinaman, in endeavouring to pick up a stone, received a blow upon the nape of the neck, which stretched him dead. Seeing this, Thompson gently lifted up the body of A-tae, and carrying it into the cell, endeavoured to bring her back to life. When she became conscious, he asked her where she was wounded, upon which she motioned to her side, and again closed her eyes as if in great pain.

"Poor little thing—my curse on the brute who did it. How could any one with a *heart* do such a cruel deed?" he observed in English. Then

added in her language, "Fear not, A-tae, you will soon be well."

The girl opened her eyes upon hearing his voice, and smiling faintly, begged him not to sorrow for her, she was so happy resting in his arms.

Thompson gazed upon the loving face, but in spite of vain endeavours to restrain his emotion, his lips quivered, and big tears coursed down his cheeks.

"Don't weep, Yung-Yung-Sho."

"God—help—me. I deserve to lose you, as a punishment for my sins."

"Speak my own language."

"A-tae, my heart is broken, and would I were in your place. I have not loved you as I should. I am not worthy of such love as yours, you pure lily."

Upon hearing this the poor girl lifted her head, laid her cheek upon his, and kissing him gently, said, "Yung-Yung-Sho, I'm—so—happy!" then dropped upon his shoulder, and giving him a look of ineffable love, closed her eyes, and in a short time all her earthly troubles were over.

When he found that she was dead he clasped her to his heart, and lavished the most endearing epithets upon her—"Open your eyes once more! O darling A-tae! Look at me again! Your heart still beats." But the light of the beautiful eyes was dimmed for ever, and the loving little heart would never beat for him again. All day he held her in his arms, and when evening came

he lit a lamp—which had been her present—and watched her body through the long winter night, At times, fancying she smiled at him, he would bend over her and listen—but to hear the beating of his own heart—then he would gently kiss her lips, and resume his lonely watch.

There, in the presence of a woman who had shown by her every action how tenderly and dearly she had loved him, the sailor looked back upon his past life, and contrasted the conduct of the girl before him with that of his former loves. “None of them were half as good as she,” he thought, and he vowed henceforth to shun the society of the opposite sex.

At daybreak he took her once more in his arms, and buried her in the snow near the entrance of the ravine, taking care to arch stones over her in such a manner that no wild animal could get at the body. The snow was falling fast when he did this, and in a short time the tumulus was completely hidden with a veil of spotless purity; then he returned to the hermitage, and having dressed in the winter suit of the bonze; left the ravine. As he passed the place where his lost love lay so silent he knelt reverently and prayed that she might be in a happier state where she would never have a sorrow; then, with a heavy heart, he wandered forth, going he cared not whither.

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